# **HALESOWEN**

Top brass joining with Songsters to celebrate season

- see page 2



Surprise party as school caretaker Len says farewell

- see page 3



Terror for family in dash to escape stone-throwing yobs

- see page 16



# THE £60m POSTCODE LOTTERY

# Big discrepancy on funding for neighbouring authorities

AXPAYERS in Halesowen and Rowley
Regis face a postcode
ery in funding for public
rices — with Dudley
ncil receiving £60

RAPAYERS in HaleBudley borough, including the town of Halesowen, and the south-west part of Sandwell, covering Rowley Regis.
Mr Morris said the areas had similar levels of population and deprivation, yet there is a £60 million discrepancy.

"I am simply saying that we need to get to a point where this grant allocation does not hrow up such significant discrepandlocations and greater transparency of the process. lottery in funding for public services - with Dudley Council receiving £60 million less a year than £60 neighbouring Sandwell from Whitehall.

MP James Morris, who represents the constituency including the two local authorities, highlighted the discrepancy in funding.

The seat covers the south-east part of

the process

### Settlement

The Conservative MP told the Commons: "My central focus is to ensure fairness in the grant allocation process. However, there is a discrepancy between these two metropolitan authorities. "Dudley metropolitan council receives £60 million less funding than Sandwell metropolitan authority. They have

"I am simply saying that we need to get to a point where this grant allocation does not throw up such significant discrepan-cies, not just between metropolitan bor-oughs and the shires – but between metropolitan authorities within particu-lay regions"

metropolitan authorities within particular regions."

The Government is due to announce details of its local government finance settlement shortly. Mr Morris said the "funding shortfalls" needed to be tackled. He said the way in which the formula grant is calculated was "very complicated" and "lacking in transparency".

"There is an urgent need to reform how we calculate the distribution. More transparency in the allocation process is critical," he added.

Mr Morris raised his concerns during a debate

Mr Morris raised his concerns during a debate on changes to council funding by central gov-ernment, which was spearheaded by Labour last night.

It claimed local coun-It claimed local coun-cils would lose an average of 27 per cent of their funding over the next four years leading to "substantial job losses". Communities Secre-tary Eric Pickles said the

distribution of funding would be "fair" and accused Labour and the unions of "reckless scaremongering" about job



Playing the ukulele is library user Pritpal Burjy with musician Steve Meredith

# Library is striking it plucky

AT one time a mere cough would provoke disapproving stares in a library.

But times have changed and now people in the Black Country are being invited to come along and learn the ukulele. The scheme is under way at branches in Tipton.

Robert Hazel, manager of Tipton library, said: "We are really excited about offering the loan of ukuleles, in addition to the usual books, CDs and DVDs.

"We are working in partnership with the Midland Music Network to promote music in the area.

the Midland Music Network to promote music in the area. "In all we have 20 ukuleles, painted every colour of the rainbow, that will be available to borrow in the same way as a book. "They can be loaned for four weeks at

a time and renewed in just the same way." Ukuleles will be available to loan from libraries in Tipton, Glebefields, Great Bridge, as well as from the Neptune Health Centre in Tipton. Each instrument comes with a tutor book and a DVD on how to learn to play. If successful the scheme could be rolled out to other areas

### out to other areas Health

Mr Hazel added: "The cost of the project has been covered by a grant from Tipton Town team.
"Ukuleles are now the most popular instrument in schools and are an easy instrument to learn. Research also \$228,652 but had just 28,052 but had just 28,055 but had just 28,0 instrument can have a really beneficial influence on health."

**Auction** conmen ordered to pay £36,000

THREE fraudsters who sold thousands of pounds of fake shoes and clothing over the internet have been ordered to pay back more than £36,000.

Conmen Jason Messen

Commen Jason Messenger, Kevin Gibbons and Simon Jones, all from Sandwell, used auction website ebay to sell counterfeit Nike trainers and Timberland boots.

On Monday they were back at Wolverhampton Crown Court for a proceeds of crime hearing when Judge Michael Challinor formally confiscated the remaining funds. The payback amount is less than 12 per cent of the £317,629 that the commen raked in from the scam.

the commen raked in from the scam.

Messenger, aged 38, of Britannia Road, Rowley Regis, appeared in the dock following completion of half an 18-month prison sentence for pos-sessing goods with a false trademark for sale and fraud relating to false bids on ebay.

### Raided

Raided

Joining him were Gibbons, of Ascot Close, Oldbury, and Jones, of Midhill Drive, Rowley Regis, who were both given suspended prison sentences for selling fake label shoes on ebay.

The court heard on Monday that Messenger had benefited by £233,523 but had only £25,304 available. He was given 12 months to hay the available amount back.

Gibbons, 27, who admitted possessing goods with a false trademark for sale and received a suspended 12-month jail term and 200 hours of unpaid work, benefited by £56,454 but had only £8,664.

Jones, 30, who admitted the same charge and was given a nine-month suspended jail sentence and 120 hours of unpaid work, benefited by £28,652 but had just £28,652 but had just £28,652 but had just

were given six months to pay back the amounts.

# **Road safety scheme may** lose out as cuts take toll

of £3 million in a year.

"We cannot keep the roads as safe as we would like them to be

TRAFFIC calming schemes needed in Sandwell could be put on ice due to a lack of funding.
Council bosses said residents would suffer but cost-cutting was unavoidable after the road safety budget was slashed by 25 per cent.

Councillor Derek Rowley, Sandwell's roads boss, said:
"The road safety budget has been cut by around £800,000 out of £3 million in a year.

If we are hit by cuts that large in a year. Clearly the Government has little or no regard for road safety."
Residents living near Britannia Road for the next programme of speed signs activated by cars.

In response to a separate request for traffic calming measures on Britannia Road.

Crashes

The campaign follows two crashes in recent years on the lands Police to ask if they would bosses said the best action they could take at the moment was to consider Britannia Road for the next programme of speed signs activated by cars.

In response to a separate request for traffic calming in February, council bosses said they had re-marked the road at its junction with Habberley Road and Spring Avenue. They added they would contact West Midlands Police to ask if they would consider speed enforcement crashes in recent years on the road as it meets Habberley Road and Spring Avenue. Council campaigns on Britannia Road.

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# Strays hope for that purrfect gift



Veterinary nurses Kerrie Sheldon and Jade Bartle with cats Annie and Harry

KIND-hearted animal lovers in Dudley are being asked to 'Give a Stray a Christmas Dinner'. Rosewood Animal Hospital, in Mason Street, Coseley, is appealing for toys, food and blankets to donate to rescue centres in the region. The food will be taken to local organisations include the Cats Protection League, the Greyhound Trust and PAWS — which rehabilitates injured and orphaned wildlife and shelters and adopts homeless cats and doors.

dogs.

Head nurse Julie Woodcock said: "We run the appeal every year to try and give stray animals in the Black Country a Christmas dinner and some other treats. People are usually very generous and really do all they can to support our appeal." all they can to support our appeal."

People are asked to take their donations to the hos-

pital in Mason Street. For more information ring 01902 671 777.

# Trojan bus to target the stone-throwing vandals

A "TROJAN" bus with reinforced windows which carries plainclothes police officers is being developed to clamp down on yobs throwing stones and snowballs at vehicles in the West Midlands.

Bus operator National Express announced the plan after bus windows were broken in five attacks in a week in Sedgley alone. It will operate on routes where buses have come under attack across the region and will take to the roads early

National Express will launch the bus following the success of similar schemes in other

parts of the country.

Drivers have been warned to be extra vigilant when driving through Sedgley, where yobs have attacked buses on the 558 route between Wolverhampton and Dudley, with High Street and the Bull Ring being hotspots.

High Street and the Bull Rir There have been five inci-dents in a week. No passen-gers or staff have been injured, and an investiga-tion has been launched by West Midlands Police.

West Midlands Police.
Detectives and National
Express officials are looking
through CCTV images to
find those responsible for
the attacks.
Safer travel manager for
the transport company

Safer travel manager to the transport company, Tony Dallison, said the Trojan bus scheme was designed to target those who smashed windows.

### Instantly

"We take anti-social behaviour very seriously and are developing this bus scheme," he said.
"A Trojan bus is a vehicle with reinforced windows and plainclothes officers inside. As soon as the officers spot stone or other projectile throwing they can get off the vehicle and apprehend those responsible instantly." instantly.

Area manager John Morrow said: "Safety Area manager John Morrow said: "Safety remains our absolute prior-ity. We will remain in close contact with police officers to share any CCTV images."

## Music, laughter and magic

A NIGHT of song, dance and comedy is being held to raise cash for a Black Country charity.

Proceeds from the variety show at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on Thursday, January 27, will go to the Geoff Hill Charitable Trust which gives grants to groups and charities. Comic Lee Wilson, magician John Milner and popular songtress Maggie O'Hara are among those taking part. Tickets at £8 to £10 are available from 01384 812812 or online at dudley.gov.uk

# **Christmas crafts** at new arts base

offering arts and crafts

offering arts and crafts workshops this month. Artspace Brierley Hill opened in an empty shop in October and is being run by Dudley Arts Council. It follows the success of Artspace in Dudley which finished earlier this year. Workshops are provided by Dudley Council's adult and community learning

community and community learning and include an introduction to watercolours, creative art, upholstery, jewellery

making and family Christ-mas crafts.

An art gallery will also be featured as part of the new venue and will display work local artists including Dudlev's Visual Arts

Network.

Artspace Brierley Hill is a
12 month project and will
run workshops until September 2011. For information call in at Artspace, 8,
Maple Row, Mill Street,
Brierley Hill, or call Anna
Fusco on 01384 816587.

# Choir raises the roof for charity



Bob Biggs with the Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir

will be helping to raise the roof with festive melodies to celebrate raising charity cash at a concert in Dudley Concert Hall this

Sunday.
The Gentlemen
Male Songsters Male Voice Choir, based at Wall Heath, will be joined by Phoenix West Midlands Band and Brass youngsters from Cotwall Sedglev

TV presenter Michael Collie will be the compere for the evening. The choir will also be pre-senting cheques to its chosen charities the Georg-ina Ward at Russells Hall Hos-pital, the Rainbow Breast Reconstruction Group, and the St Thomas Community Network.

The concert starts at 7.30pm, and tickets priced £8 are available from 01384 838863 or Dudley Council Plus or

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# JB's fate in balance after deal is denied

MYSTERY surrounds the future of troubled Dudley rock club JB's as administrators denied a company's claims it now owns the music venue.

company's chalms it now owns the music venue.

JB's was placed into administration in October with debts of £450,000. The business, including the premises in Castle Hill, was subsequently put on the market for £350,000.

A company calling itself London Entertainments set up a Facebook page advertising itself as the new owners of JB's.

The website's creator Kay Rai has posted a link for more information to the London Entertainments website. It carries a statement claiming it has bought a 1,000 capacity club and a 1,000 capacity club and suggests JB's will be suggests JB's venamed Monroes.

Administrator John Travers, of Stourbridge-based John D Travers & Co, today said: "I can categori-cally state that the sale of

today said: "I can categorically state that the sale of JB's has not been concluded. "Anyone who claims to have purchased the club is mistaken."

He added that he was in "advanced negotiations" with a potential buyer. "Things are moving slower than I had hoped, but we are still hopeful of a buccessful outcome," he said.

The London Entertainments website states: "London Entertainments website states: "London Entertainments has recently acquired the huge 1,000 capacity nightcub, "Monroes' - Pride of The Black Country, We have purchased this club."

# No panic as assaults on hospital staff rise 33pc

ASSAULTS on staff working at the trust that runs Rowley Regis Hospital and Sandwell Hospital have risen by

and Sandwell Hospital have risen by 33 per cent in the last year.

The annual statistics which have been released by Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust reveal there were 157 assaults in 2009-10, up from 118 the year before. At Dudley, the annual figure was 53

before. At Dudley, the annual figure was 53. In Sandwell, security bosses have attrib-uted the rise to better reporting from staff as opposed to an actual rise in assaults. Of the 157 assaults reported at Rowley Regis, Sandwell, and City hospitals, 70

THE chairman of the Tory party has said the Black Country should tell the far

right English Defence League to keep well away. Baroness Warsi said their

Carols for worthy causes A CHRISTMAS tree of light and carol service evening at Hagley Golf and Country Club will raise money for the captain's charities on Monday. Money raised will go to Phoenix House in Stourbridge, Breast Cancer UK and the

Coeliac Society. Admission is free and a fish and chip supper will be available for £5. Gates at the Wassell Grove Lane Club open at 7.30 pm to 9.30pm.

Stay away EDL

says Tory chief

sive and divisive agenda".

Around 100 EDL protestors turned up in Wolver-

hampton city centre on November 20 despite having not gone through the appropriate channels of informing the police. There have also been protests in Dudley.

Baroness Warsi added: "The BNP did not do well electorally but there are other groups that are putting forward an aggressive and divisive agenda."

hampton city centre November 20 desj

involved medical factors, including people lashing out after waking up from an anaesthetic or people with conditions such as dementia.

Paula Clark, chief executive of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, said there was now CCTV and 24 hour security.

"The Dudley Group of Hospitals takes a zero tolerance approach to violence and aggression and we encourage staff to report any incidents that occur.

"During 2009/10 the trust reported a total of 53 physical assaults against our staff, 38 of which were by patients who were offused at the time.

"While we understand that sometimes aggression is driven by fear or confusion we believe violence towards our staff, who are here to help, is unacceptable.

Aggressive

### Aggressive

"In order to provide a safe environment for employees, patients, visitors and others we have CCTV cameras monitored 24 hours a day, as well as a responsive 24-hour manned security service to deal with disorder on our

sites.

Ms Clark added: "Front line staff receive mandatory

onflict receive mandatory conflict resolution training." In May 2010, Russells Hall Hospital launched the first "hospital watch scheme" in partnership with police to encourage staff, patients and visitors to be more alert and to report

more alert and to report incidents.
Peter Finch, security adviser and security man-agement specialist at Sandwell & West Birming-ham Hospitals NHS Trust said: 'Our assault numbers have gone up because people are reporting more."

# Surprise party as Len retires



Headteacher Adrian Pembleton (centre), with retiring care-taker Len Coley and his wife Di, who also retired recently after years of service as a lunchtime supervisor and cleaner

"IRREPLACEABLE" school caretaker Len Coley has locked up for the last time after more than 25 years – and was treated to a party by staff and pupils.

Mr Coley, aged 65, bid a fond farewell to Caslon Primary School, Halesowen, where he has worked since 1984.

But staff and pupils were not going to let

were not going to let the much-loved care taker go without saying a very special

Youngsters made him cards wishing him

him cards wishing him a happy retirement and a cake was baked in his honour. The school also organised a surprise party attended by current and former members of staff. His retirement comes three months after that of his wife, 61-year-old Diane Coley, who worked at the school as a cleaner. They plan to spend their retirement by indulging their passion for walkingand spending time with four-year-old grand-daughter Grace. Mr Coley, of Meres

Mr Coley, of Meres
Road, said he planned
to stay active by taking
on volunteering work
for Dudley Council.

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# Baroness Warsi said their protests put unnecessary pressure on police. The peer, on a visit to the West Midlands, said the EDL targeted the Black Country to "stir up resentment that isn't there" between Muslims and other people, and claimed that the debate over the Dudley mosque plan had been used PROFESSIONAL CARPET &



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### thechronicle

CHICESTER BOSCH-VALLAN

# Made to measure as ex-tailor draws town

THE ·STARK contrasts between Sedgley just after World War Two and the present has been captured in drawings by a 92-year-old retired tailor and photographs taken six

decades later.

Avid local historian and former businessman Ron
Baker, of Cotwall End Road, Baker, of Cotwall End Road, has been drawing scenes of Sedgley village since he left the British Army in 1946, a year after the war. Now some of his work, showing Sedgley's All Saints Parish Church and the sur-rounding area servant is coin.

rarish Church and the sur-rounding area around is going on show this weekend along-side photographs of the same locations taken by 57-year-old Martin Jones, of Greenfield View.

### **Christmas**

Mr Baker, a founder member of Sedgley Local His-torical Society, who used to run a chain of shops in the Black Country called Quality Clothes, was born in Swan

Village.
He said: "I was based in Kenya during the war and, since I came back in 1946, I must have done 400 drawings

of the Sedgley area.
"I wanted to put it all down for history before the area was

destroyed for new buildings."
Mr Jones, a parishioner of
All Saints and a member of the
district church committee, said:
"The exhibition will highlight
the dramatic change that has
happened around the church
since the years after Second
World War.
"One scene shows the old



Ron Baker with some of his drawings



The Old Sunday School in Sedgley

Sunday school building on the site now occupied by Iceland and Lloyds Chemists, another a tranquil Priory Lane before the construction of the new Sedgley Library and Ladies Walk Health Centre.

"Perhaps the most dramatic contrast is in Dean Street, which until the 60s was home

to a row of cottages – all now gone, replaced by a car park."
The exhibition takes place on December 11, 12, 18 and 19 during the church's Christmas Tree Festival.
On both Saturdays – December 11 and 18, between 11am and 3pm – Sedgley residents will be able to record their

memories of the church and the village in two audio reminiscence sessions run by Mr Jones.

Jones.

Mr Jones hopes that, follow ing the taster display during December, a larger exhibition of Mr Baker's previously unpublished drawings will be held in the church in 2011.



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### thechronicle

# Pass the parcel record bid

DUDLEY has been chosen to take part in a Guinness World Record for the largest ever pass the parcel game.

A giant parcel the size of a small car will make the parcel that the part of the size of th

its way through Dudley in December, as part of a tour of 10 towns or cities across the UK.

across the UK.

The other locations involved in the attempt are Aberaeron, Edinburgh, Kendal, Leeds, Littlehampton, Liverpool, Manchester and Reading.

### **Adventure**

Adventure
The parcel will contain thousands of pounds worth of toys, which will be given away over the course of Woolies' World Record Breaking Pass the Parcel Christmas Adventure.
Small gifts will also be given to the first 100 people who go along and the lucky town which peels off the last layer of the parcel is promised a "celebrity surprise".
The date the parcel will be in Dudley has not yet been revealed.
To follow the tour, visit the www.facebook.com/

the www.facebook.com/ woolworthsuk website.

### Faith theme for Mothers Union

# It's time to test out those toys



Jill Bytheway at Merry Hill with a great niece, Maariya Khan, and a great-nephew, Riyadh Khan



The Toy Testing Station at Eat Central, in the Merry Hill shopping centre, Brierley Hill

Mothers Union
Hagley Mothers'
Union members are due to hear June Young,
Dudley South's deanery leader, talk on "Faith in Action" at their meeting on January 20.

The group also plans to attend a carol service, to at St Michael's Church, Norton, Stourbridge, at 2.15pm on December 16.

young ones while their wives went round the shops or those who needed a break from the bumper shopping crowds.

Top of many youngsters' wish lists this year are figures from the latest Toy Story film such as Buzz Lightyear along with some of the old favourites like building blocks."

Lawrence Way in Wednesbury state of the toy station with her great niece and nephew Maariya fhan, aged four and Riyadh sells. They have enjoyed playing with the car garage, Buzz Lightyear and the building blocks."

For Saturdays until December 18 children can head to the toy factory between 11am and 4pm.

# Borough MPs' expense bill tops £24,000 DUDLEYS MPs claimed more than £24,000 expenses in the first three and a half months of this Parliament. Stourbridge MP Margot James claimed £353; Dudley South MP Chris Kelly, £4,857; Dudley North MP Ian Austin, 1 he were paid £3.1m – even 1 he were not paid because their claims were either rejected, submitted incorrectly, or they because the midst of public spending were not paid because their claims were either rejected, submitted incorrectly, or they because the midst of public spending were not paid because their claims were either rejected, submitted incorrectly, or they because the midst of public spending were not paid because their staff costs were unveiled by the claims were either rejected, submitted incorrectly, or they standards Authority.

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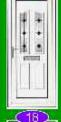
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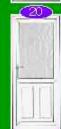












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ROWLEY READS, PORTWAY BLL.



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A finitideal to calte first floor flat, Intelly comprising of Too Belirooms, Rittel Breakfast Ribbies, Sloover Room, Longie, Donhile Glabials, Car Central Herbits, Communal Cantens, and On Posal Pariding.



An indiministral end tensor house, briefly comprising of Two Bedrooms, Gas Central Hearthing Lourney, Spanion's Pitter Kitchen, Bartimoom offin Shower, Pront and Rear



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DEPLAY, JEVOTION CTREET

A finition first floor fat, heldy completely of Warm Air Herbing Spackers LMile Room, Ritter Robert, Double Berloom, Batterom outs 80 SHOWER, Communal Carriers On Rocal Parities









## thechronicle

# Royal wedding glass sculpture by Malcolm

ford is to create a sculpture to celebrate the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

Allister Malcolm, resident hot Glass Museum, is already working on designs for the piece with a view to starting work this

with a view to starting work this month.

The 35-year-old said it was "still early days" for the piece, but planned for it to include precious metals such as gold, and images of the royal

do good to couple.

He said it would not be a platter or a bowl like other commemorative pieces in the collection at the museum in Compton Drive, King-

Among items in the collection are two platters created by Smethwick glass firm Chase Brothers.

### Design

Design

The first was created shortly after the wedding of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, on November 20, 1947.

The other was created in 1981 to celebrate the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer.

Mr Malcolm said his piece would be very different to those in the archive and would be a more sculpted design. "I do not plan to start work on the piece until late December after the tiems have all been completed for Christmas," he said.

"By the beginning of January I aim to have a prototype piece finished

to have a prototype piece finished with a view to completing the fin-ished design by the end of the month. "Obviously for an occasion like this I want it to be something very

Mr Malcolm has been an artist at the museum for the past three years, and his latest creation will go on show at Broadfield House.



Artist Allister Malcolm with some of the pieces which were created to commemorate past Royal weddings in the collection at Broadfield House Museum, Kingswinford

# **Museums to host** festive fun activities

AN action-packed programme of Christmas. As well as getting a activities for the Christmas gift, youngsters will be able to season has been drawn up by make crafts and take part in a Dudley Council's Juniors at Museums (JAM) Club.

A Christmas festival launched at Broadfield House Glass House Glass Museum are Museum on Saturday, with arts running pantomime themed and crafts sessions, story-telling, and children will also be January 1, while a Narnia trail able to meet Mr and Mrs Claus. Will run at the Red House Glass Father Christmas will be visitone with January 2.

Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/crosis Tickets are £3. Call 01384 812812.

### Carols boost for charities

THREE charities are in line to benefit from a carol service at Dudley Concert Hall this Sunday

# **the**chronicle

# **TECHNOLOGY**

# Way to join the eBook revolution on a budget View Quest is a

L great eBook reader for those

who don't want to fork out



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Maker.
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The water detaches waling it

able 44mm pods.

The water container detaches, making it easy to fill and clean.

Go for a dark continental style espresso or complete a cappuccino or latte with frothy wilk created with the built-in variable frother.

There are two Italian style

who don't want to fork out for one of the more expensive electronic readers or tablets.

It also doubles as a media centre, able to play videos, display photos and play music.

It's main task, displaying of Books, is handled well. The five inch high-resolution backlit display with its anti-glare TFT screen can be read in bright sunshine or darkness with Greating and 20 hours for lisadjustable brightness, back-

You have to pop on a pair of phones for sound and a back-ground music function allows you to listen to tunes whilst eading. The BookBox has a rubberized

display with its anti-glare TFT screen can be read in bright sunshine or darkness with adjustable brightness, background and text colours.

There are the bookmarking, and 100 hours for lisering to music.
Content can be added by content can be add

# Go on a PSP monster hunt

MONSTER hunting game into a monster detector in the Invizimals Shadowzone (7) and the cute EyePet (3) are now combines elements of Pokemon available, on their own or bundled with a PSP camera for bundled with a PSP camera for Shadowzone adds new monsters fans of the handheld Sony games console.

Plugging the camera into your PSP, as well as adding camera pet who you can bring to your functionality, turns the machine

# New college will keep old surgery

first images of what Dudley College's Dudley College's new sixth form and higher education centre could look like if revised plans are given the go-ahead.

ahead.

Architects at the college have been working on revised plans for the development, off Priory Road, which forms part of a proposed £30 million campus.

The college had hoped to demolish Kudos House, a 19th century doctor's surgery, to make way for the scheme, but last week it was awarded Grade II listed status which effectively protects it from demolition.

tion. It will now be forced to spend more than £1 million incorporating the old building into the designs, and officials are now looking into ways of raising funds.

### Classical

Classical
Afuture use for Kudos
House has yet to be
decided, but it could
become a tutorial centre
for higher education students, an incubation
centre for micro-businesses, or it could house
college offices, officials
said.
The development
-called Dudley Sixth and
Dudley Higher — will
catter for more than 600
students and bosses
hope building work will

expected open in September 2012.

The college principal, Lowell Williams, said: "We are very pleased to be releasing these new

pians.
"When we were informed of the possible spot-listing of Kudos House, we knew we had to prepare an alternative plan or else the whole of our project could have been in jeopardy.

### Integral

"Our developments are absolutely integral to the future regeneration of Dudley town centre."

Mr Williams added:
"We think the control of the

Mr Williams added:
"We think our new
design still provides a
fabulous resource for the
town and will greatly
enhance the educational
facilities for young
people and adults.

"The downside is that
the new scheme is significantly more expensive,
over £1 million more,
and the burden of the
cost of retaining and ren-

cost of retaining and ren-ovating Kudos House falls solely to the college."

Ialis solely to the college."

English Heritage spokeswoman Renee Fok said Kudos House had "architectural and historic special interest as a remarkably complete and rare early example of a purposebuilt doctor's house in a restrained classical style."

A planning application is expected in the new year.





A view of the proposed college development off Priory Road. A planning application is expected to be submitted to Dudley Council after Christmas







# 3 CHEERF































































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### thechronicle

# Hospital parking fines through 1,000 barrier

MORE than 1,030 fines have been issued to drivers parking illegally on roads near a Dudleyhospital during the past

Roads around Russells Hall Hospital are regularly clogged with cars as people struggle to find a spot at the car park, prompting com-plaints from residents living

plaints from residents living near the site. Figures show that 1,034 tickets were issued between October 1, 2009, and October 31, 2010, raising thousands of pounds for Dudley Council.

### Reduced

There were 962 fines given to people parked along Pensnett High Street, 65 in Bushey Fields Road and seven on the A4101 Pensnett Road.

The council says the "vast majority" of the £50 and £70 fines are paid within 14 days, meaning a reduced figure is paid.

A£6million staffear park with

paid. A£6million staffcar park with 691 spaces is currently being built at the rear of the hospital. Hospital bosses hope the new multi-storey park will help to ease the congestion on roads and free up space for patients and visitors.

### Challenged

Council spokesman Phil Parker said: "Penalty Charge Notices are issued to vehicles that appear to be parking in con-travention of the council's traffic regulation orders.

regulation orders.

"Any ticket may be challenged by the motorist if they believe it was incorrectly issued."
Staff living within a mile of Russells Hall Hospital will not be allowed to use the new multistorey park.

# Noodle needs oodles of love

CUDDLY kitty Noodle is

CUDDIX kitty Noodle is hoping someone will take him in before Christmas after being found wandering through the streets of Dudley.

He has now been at Stuart Vets in Brook Street, Dudley, for more than a month and head nurse Karen Morton said while all the staff were very fond of him, he needs a real home.

"We have put notices up in the practice and put a "found cat" notice in local papers but nobody has come forward for

has come forward for him," she said.

him," she said.
"We nicknamed him
Noodle just because he's
fun and a bit greedy. He's Notine just because he's a really nice cat so we just want someone to come forward before Christmas to give him a new home. He's quite a big bruiser of a boy but very affectionate. He will make someone a lovely pet."

Miss Morton said staff were unsure of the age of Noodle, a black and white tom cat – but he has been neutered.

Anyone interested in giving Noodle a home can call the veterinary surgery on 01384 252817.







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# Female staff demand equal wage payouts

have lodged claims for equal pay with West Midland councils in a move that could cost taxmillions

pounds.

Cash-strapped councils are still trying to deal with single status agreements demanded by the former Labour government 13 years

Wolverhampton City Council has already paid £33 million to settle m 2,000 equal pay claims. But

They relate to low-paid women including cleaners who get around £10,000 a year less than men doing equivalent jobs, such as those working on bin collections

tions.

A leaked report recently revealed that the goodwill payouts were bungled and that foreign workers were able to claim them without proving their right to work in the UK.

Dudley Council is dealing with 2,700

nas 10.
South Staffordshire
Council sorted out its single
status arrangements 10
years ago and has received no claims recently.

Wyre Forest Councils cur-rently has no claims to deal with. Local authorities

trying to save tens of millions of pounds as a result of 28 per cent cuts to their budgets.

# Virgin rail preparing for busiest day of 2010

THE busiest day on the trains this year is expected to be Wednesday, December 29.

People are booking tickets already in a bid to keep costs down. Train companies are due to put their prices up by an average of 6.2 per cent in January.

Virgin Trains, which runs services on the West Coast Main Line through

Coast Main Line through Sandwell and Dudley Sandwell station, has put up 50,000 first class tickets at reduced prices.

# Company to protect school land for future

A PRIVATE company is now being set up to protect land owned by Sandwell schools from being sold off for redevel-

schools from being som on 101 reueveropment.

Sandwell Council is now set to nominate
four members to join a Local Authority
Controlled Company which will protect
playing fields and other school land for the
future, even if schools were removed from
the control of local authorities.

The council is inlauching ahead with

the control of local authorities.

The council is ploughing ahead with plans after it was stung with an £11 million bill, effectively "buying back" its own land to create the new Rowley Learning

When further education colleges were taken out of local authority control in the

late 1980s, the land went with them. Dut when Dudley College, in Rowley Regis, closed its doors it put the land up for sale for housing and Sandwell Council ended up

having to pay for it.

Councillor Steve Eling Sandwell
Councils finance boss said: "With so many
of the further educations sites, bought with
public money sold off for housing in the
1980s we felt we had to act now to protect schools land in the future.

"Academies and foundation trust schools are now in a position where they could sell off their land in the same way if they

"Sandwell Council sees this as a positive

# Officers in pledge on issuing warrents

POLICE in Dudley are marking the Advent period by executing a warrant a day. A dedicated team of Operation Advent offi-cers will spend the month, working spend the month. working specifically to tackle known criminals

in the area. The eight officers will use information received relating to suspicious or criminal behaviour.

Suspected drug pro-ducers and dealers are expected to be be tar-

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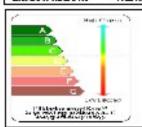
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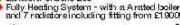


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# £500 of prizes up for grabs



To celebrate the store opening and as an extra special treat for shoppers this Christmas, we've teamed up with The Chronicles to offer readers the chance to win a share of £500 to spend in the new store, which is located at 5/6 Lichfield

Road, Walsall Wood.

Road, Walsall Wood.

One lucky winner will get a "shoptastic" £100 of The Original Factory Shop vouchers as a first prize.

There will be four lots of £50 vouchers up for grabs as 2nd Thizes and 10 runners—up will each receive £20 gift vouchers.

prizes and 10 runners-up win executions to spend.
With the fantastic prices in store you can be sure of your prize money going a long way.
Plus, with Christmas just around the corner you'll be able to pick a trolley full of decorations and gifts perfect for all the family at stunning prices.
The Original Factory Shop Walsall Wood brings an extensive range of men's, ladies' and children's fashions, as well as homewares, electricals and toiletries, including a large selection of branded goods, to the town.
To be in with a chance of winning one of these prizes please answer the following question:

### Q. Where is the new store located?

Please send your answers on a postcard to The Chronicles Factory Competition, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhamptr WV1 1ES. Closing date for entries is Friday December 17

Usual competition terms and conditions apply. All prizes will be in the form of gift vouchers. There is no cash alternative.

FACTORY SHOP

# thechronicle

# It's absolutely super, Sonic

### Round-up of the latest Wii games

### SONIC COLOURS (3, SEGA)

SUNIL CULTURN 10, scan, RAINBOW coloured high-speed heaven for fans of the blue hedgehog. Switching between 3D and classic 2D side-strolling style, this turbo-charged race through Eggman's incredible intential annuament mark is one nterstellar amusement park is one

interstellar amusement para in the heck of a ride.

You can dash, jump, double jump, spin and slide, as you free the ghost-like wisps before Eggman can get his greedy hands on them. This is a real return to form for the blue blur, it's certainly super Sonic.

### BATMAN: THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD. THE VIDEOGAME (12, WARNER BROS)

The animated version of the Caped Cruder stars, with Robin, in a good old fash-

game. The cartoon graphics are right for the subject matter as Batman and Robin take on a variety of super-villains with the help of a posse of super helpers from the world of DC comics.

Batman can call on help from The Flash, Aquaman and others as he battles his way through Gotham City, London, Science Island and even an alien planet. Various super gadgets can be unlocked and the Wii can link up with the DS version involving the character Bat-Mite. Wham! and kapow! fun.

# SCOOBY-DOO AND THE SPOOKY

SWAMP (7, WARNER BROS)
Play as Scooby, Shaggy or any of the
Mystery Inc characters in this undemanding but fun game based on the long-running

In this new adventure the gang encounter a mysterious swamp girl cooking up a brew in her cauldron and, to find out what she's up to, they have to face creepy monsters, collect clues and solve puzzles. monsters, collect clues and solve puzzles. The character voices are spot on, the spooky music is excellent and the animation decent but it could have done without the canned laughter. Co-op mode means friends and family can drop into the game at any stage to help out.

GAMES

### MONOPOLY STREETS (3. EA)

MONOPOLY STREETS (3, EA)
Play on the Classic board or a 3D version
City version of it, populated by your own
home-made Miis, as the vintage family
board game celebrates its 76th birthday
with a revamp for the Wii.
You can play the regular Monopoly
rules or choose one of the variants, or
even edit the rules to suit your own
style. There's no leaping about, you hold
the Wiimote side-on as a game control
pad. And if you haven't played a console
game version of Monopoly before, it is
enjoyable to see those familiar tokens
burst into animated life.



Offers available from Friday 10th December until Thursday 16th December

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### thechronicle

# Life is sweet as **Louis lands deal**

A YOUNG Kinver entrepreneur who set up his own business when he was 12 years old is celebrating after signing a deal to export thousands of choco-late bars to the US.

Louis Barnett, now aged 19, of Kinver, is the founder of Chokolit, which makes quality chocolate for specialist food shops, delicatessens and other tability of the control of the control

shops, delicatessens and other retail outlets.

The family-run firm has five employees, including his parents, Phil and Mary.

After dropping out of school at 11, Louis, who suffers from dyslexia and dyspraxia, began by supplying products to supermarket chain Waitrose.

### Batch

Batch

Louis has signed a deal to supply a US distributor with 37,000 bars of chocolate after exhibiting at the Fancy Fine Food Fair in New York.

The new products are ethically produced, environmentally friendly and free from palm oil and artificial colours, flavours or additives will be on sale at shops across America.

Distributor European Imports will ship the chocolate to independent delis in 12 states including Arizona, Texas, Oho, Georgia and Kansas.

Louis said: "This is great news for the business.

"By this time next year, I antic-

"By this time next year, I anticipate that about 70 per cent of our sales will be to overseas markets.

"We have just negotiated to send out a pallet load of choco-lates to a distributor in New Zealand and are also targeting Spain, Portugal and India."

Spain, Portugal and India.

The company name Chokolit
was borne out of the way in which
Louis spelled chocolate due to his
dyslexia. Louis, of Enville Road,
Kinver, runs the firm from his



Louis Barnett celebrates his big US chocolate deal with international trade adviser Maggie Neale

home in the village, and manufacturing is done at factories across the country.

across the country.

He is personally in demand around the globe and has given talks on his experiences being a young entrepreneur at universities in Singapore, Switzerland and Mexico.

Learney by the country of the

He said he never expected to reach this level of success.

"I think it was Waitrose where I first thought to myself: 'Hang on

a minute this could get quite big, as I watched my product disappear through the loading bay," he said.

"At that moment it dawned on me that this was going to be my career and that's when the reali-sation started to set in."

sation started to set in.

The deal in America was brokered with financial help from Government agency UK Trade and Industry. The organisation supports small firms.

# No bites on plans to make fish lake

PLANS to build a fishing lake in a Hale-sowen wildlife haven have failed to reel in the approval of plan-

the approval of plan-ners.

Developers wanted to transform land behind Hayley Green Farm, off Hagley Road, but came up against stiff opposi-

up against stiff opposi-tion from locals.
The plans, which also included a building, were rejected by Dudley Council officials after several letters of objec-tion were received, and the resulting appeal dis-missed missed. Councillor Ken Turner

Councillor Ken Turner,
who represents Hayley
Green and Cradley
South, is glad the proposal has been rejected.
He said: "I'm very
pleased the consideration of the residents has
been taken into account,
and we can keep our
green belt area."
The plans were

green belt area."
The plans were rejected after concerns over the effect it would have on local wildlife. The land is the environment for many protected species, including badgers and otters.
The entrance to the proposed lake was also a cause for concern as the

cause for concern as the nearby Fox Hunt Island poses a hazard for pedes-

trians.

A council spokesman said: "The application was refused on grounds of the impact a new building could have on the greenbelt, and also as no protected species survey had been included in the application."

# Cheers! Pub gets new boss at the bar

AN abandoned Black Country pub, which has been closed for three years, has re-opened its doors to the public following

public iolioving a seven-month refurbishment project.

New owner Louise Carroll, aged 39, bought the derelict Old Bush Revived pub, in Powke Lane, Blackheath, in April and has now transformed it to create a new, two-room pub.

It used to have three rooms downstairs, but a wall was removed, a new colour scheme installed, new doors fitted and the kitchen extended in preparation for its opening night on Friday.

Louise has also taken on six new full-time and part-time staff and is confident the pub is now entering a successful new era. "I am bringing the traditional, welcoming pub back into Blackheath," she said.

"We are aiming to give people good beer, good lood, and a great atmosphere."

Louise, who previously ran The Fountain Inn in Tipton for 10 years, decided to buy the Old Bush Revived because she wanted to progress from being a leaseholder to outright owner.

But she added that she was also keen to move back into the area where she was born. She grew up in the now defunct Grange pub in Hanover Road, only one mile from her new location, and said it was "fantastic" to be back.

# Church workers showing socks appeal

A CHRISTIAN group is calling on Dudley residents to donate generously to their first Christmas Stocking

donate generously to their first Christmas Stocking Appeal.
Volunteers Jeanette and Malcolm Jones and Graham Bishop from Dudley Christian Fellowship launched the appeal a couple of weeks ago. It will see socks given to homeless people in time for Christmas.

socks given to homeless people in time for Christmas.

In addition to new socks, the dedicated volunteers are also appealing for gifts of new hats, scarves and gloves to be given out during the winter months.

The charity helps homeless people throughout the year with their weekly Heaven's Kitchen initiative, which sees hot meals cooked up at their Salop Street base.

Following meals, guests are given a packed lunch to take away and are offered clean clothes and a fresh pair of socks.

### Need

Need
Heaven's Kitchen started in
2007 when volunteers took to the
streets with hot soup and sleeping bags to see if there was a need
for a homeless support service in
Dudley. They have since served
more than 3,000 three-course
meals to local people in need.
Volunteer Malcolm Jones said:
'In addition to a hot meal, clean
warm socks can make a world of
difference to a homeless person
who can be out in all weathers.

"We hope that our appeal will
keep us in socks not only during

keep us in socks not only during winter months but all year

ound. "This would mean that we can



Volunteers from Dudley Christian Fellowship, Malcolm and Jeanette Jones, launch their first Christmas sock appeal at the groups centre in Salop Street

bags and other necessities to help into Dudley Counselling Centre

bags and other feeessites to help to get people back on their feet." Donations or cheques payable to Dudley Christian Fellowship and marked for the attention of Heaven's Kitchen can be dropped They're based at the Dudley Christian Fellowship, Salop Street, Dudley DY3 4AT. Alternatively call 01384 239222 for more information.

01384

### thechronicle

# Action on 90mph driving menace

MEASURES to put the brakes on speeding drivers on a main road will be discussed in the

drivers on a main road will be discussed in the New Year after a Dudley Council investigation.

More than 900 residents of Coseley have signed a petition calling for action.

They say drivers on the A463 Hurst Road near Sedgley are clocking speeds of up to 90mph – three times the 30mph limit.

Members of Dudley Council's North Dudley Area Committee were given a report from officers on how investigations into the problem were progressing.

Officers said a traffic survey would be held on the road near the Childs Avenue junction to monitor the number of cars and pedestrians using it during a 12-hour period.

The road runs along the border with Wolverhampton and officers said talks would take place with the city council to agree on a course of action.

The petition was

city council to agree on a course of action.

The petition was launched by mother-of-two Paula Matthews, 39, after a spate of crashes. Officers said she would be kept informed of any future progress and would mether in March.

A further report on the results of the survey will also be presented to the area committee later the same

committee later the same

ontn. Councillor Melvyn Mottram said: "This road can be very dangerous and any measures will make a real difference."

# Stay away plea by A&E as winter pressures rise too high DEATH rates at hospitals in Dudley and Wolverhampton were higher than expected.

to help ease pressure on the borough's accident and emergency department

by attending only if really necessary.

Bosses at Dudley Primary Care Trust are encouraging people to use community services such as Dudley Borough Walk-in Centre, at Holly Hall, local pharmacies and NHS Direct in non-urgent cases.

District nurses and other healthcare

Pushchairs hit in flats arson

Alarm at park

arson attacks

YOBS have destroyed

benches, litter bins and fences in vandal attacks at a park near Stour-

bridge.
Dudley taxpayers will now have to foot a bill of more than £1,000 to replace the items and repair damage at King George V Park, Wordsley.
Yobs used old newspapers to start a fire in two attacks at the beauty spot.
They then used wooden benches, fencing and litter bins to fuel the blaze. On

both occasions the fires have been started between the tennis courts and games area, also causing damage to plastic bollards and asphalt surfacing.

Evening

workers have been battling through the arctic weather to reach their patients and have been praised for their "tremendous" efforts. GP practices and clinics, running services such as physiotherapy and audiology and the court of the property of the court of the cour ogy, are clearing snow and ice from the access to buildings to provide as near a normal service as possible.

I USHILI I III III III II II III ALS AISOII
PUSHCHAIRS being stored in a block of flats in Halesowen were destroyed by fire after a suspected arson
attack. The small blaze started in the bin store of the flats
in Ankerdine Court, Haleso-wen, shortly after 8pm on
Sunday. Watch commander Steve Porter said nobody was
hurt in the fire.

"A few pushchairs were being stored in there, but other
than that it was just smoke damage and a bit of heat
damage to the door frame," he said.

normal service as possible.

Sally-Anne Osborne, associate director for Dudley Community Services, said: "We are making every effort to get to our patients even when the snow is coming down.

"Many of the community staff are dressed in their winter wear to make sure they complete their rounds because the patients we see rely on the services we deliver."

Meanwhile the canal

deliver." Meanwhile the canal iceboat at Dudley's Black Country Living Museum has been frozen in time by the Arctic conditions which struck last month – trapped by the ice, as are other vessels on waterways.

### Iron

Staff were hoping that they would soon be able to give demonstrations of the vital role the vessel, Ross, used to play in keeping open the canals during big

the canals during big freeze-ups.

Industry in the Black Country used to rely upon the iron boat, built in 1847, to carve a path for boats transporting raw materials and other goods.

Fiona Carding, for the museum, said: "Iceboats were dragged through the frozen canal by horses while the team of men on board ocked the vessel to and fro The attacks have been reported by Dudley Council's Green Care team. Residents living close to the park, off Lawnswood Road, are being urged to keep an eye on the site during the evening and call police immediately if they see anyone causing trouble.

# Plucky pensioner's ice rescue



Brian Heathcock with 10 year old Cain Foxall, of Rushall Close, Wordsley, whom he rescued from a frozen canal

A PENSIONER rescued a
10-year-old boy from a
canal in Stourbridge after
the youngster crashed
through ice, prompting
warnings about the
dangers caused by freezing weather.
Brian Heathcock, aged
69, knelt, reached out
and pulled terrified Cain
Foxall back on to the
Stourbridge Canal Arm
towpath on Saturday,
November 27.
Mr Heathcock, of Fairfield Rise, Wollaston,
massaged the shivering
boy's legs until he
regained his circulation
and could be taken to his
home about 200 yards
weav in Rushall Close

home about 200 yards away in Rushall Close. Mr Heathcock, who had

been out for a morning walk beside the frozen walk beside the frozen canal, said: "I heard the boy screaming," said Mr Heathcock.
"He was about three feet out from the side, up to his chest in water. He was sinking and really panishing."

"I had to get down on to my hands and knees and managed to grab his hands."

hands."
Cain's mother, Lindsey
Foxall, said: "I can't
thank Mr Heathcock
enough."
Later that day a dog
was rescued after getting
stuck in icy canal water
off Stoney Lane in
Netherton.

# Hospital rates of death

last year, according to the Dr Foster Hospital Guide. Both The Royal

Both The Royal Wolverhampton Hospi-tals NHS Trust, which runs New Cross, and The Dudley Group of Hospi-tals NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Rus-sells Hall Hospital, were singled out for mention The survey found the death rate at the Wolver-

death rate at the Wolver-hampton trust was 16 per cent higher than expected, and at the Dudley trust it was 15 per cent higher.

### Diagnosis

Paula Clark, chief executive of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said there had been a big increase in the number of inpatients and day cases in the last four years but the number of deaths has remained almost the

The Dr Foster guide uses factors including a patient's diagnosis, age and admission method.

and admission method.
If a trust has the same
number of overall deaths
as estimated, it is given a
score of 100. If it has 10
per cent more or less it
gets either 110 or 90.
Dudley's was 115 and
Wolverhampton's was
116.The death rate at
MIG Steffendship MIG Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, which was rocked by a series of tragedies at Stafford Hospital, was 87 – lower than expected.

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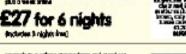


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Freeman

# **Terror for family in car** as gang throws bricks

YOBS hurled house bricks at a mother and her two young children outside a Dudley community centre.

community centre.

One missile smashed through their car window, narrowly missing their heads, as they tried to flee by driving away from the scene in Kingswinford.

Hundreds of pounds' damage was caused to the vehicle during the terrifying attack which left the family shaken.

Travel agency worker Lindsey Mason, aged 41, was with sons Jake, aged seven, and six-year-old Alex outside the Dingle Community Centre, in Madeley Road.

West Midlands Police

Road.
West Midlands Police said they had now stepped up patrols in the area to reassure families following the unprovoked attack at 6.30pm on Thursday, November 25.



AWARD-winning Black
Country actress Josie
Lawrence is set to become a Freeman of the Borough of Sandwell.
The 51-year-old, born in Old Hill, said she was "delighted and thrilled".
The actress, now living in Hackney, London, is known for the hit series Whose Line Is It Anyway? and was more recently in top TV soap EastEnders. She played Amanda Best in the Albert Square drama.
Josie, a respected stage actress, started her career at the Barlow Theatre in Oldbury where she is a patron.
She said she was "thrilled" about the tried of view off.
Wrs Mason's husband career at the Barlow Theatre in Oldbury where she is a patron.
She said she was "thrilled" about the drivers. AWARD-winning Black Country actress Josie Lawrence is set to become a Freeman of the Borough of Sandwell.

where she is a patron.

She said she was "thrilled" about the honour.

to the offenders.

Phone police on 0345 113 5000 to help.



Jamie Mason with the brick hurled through the car window

### REVIEWS

### thechronicle

# Watch it when a plan comes together fool!

### The A-Team Cert 12

You need to be very willing to suspend a lot of disbelief for this film but it's worth it. The A-Team based on the 70s hit series is a rip-roaring, eye-popping cartoon violence ride from the highly extended opening credits to the, leave-it-open-for-a-sequel ending.

Liam Neeson putting a plan together as Col Hannibal Smith.

The A-Team has franchise written all over it and the next instalment has already been hinted at by one of the cast. This said the production value on this rollercoaster ride of military and counter intelligence double crossing is fantastic.

The A-Team which, for those of you who don't know stands for Alpha Team, is led by Liam Neeson who takes on the mantle made famous by George Peppard as Hannibal Smith. They make their appearance while exposing corruption in the Mexican

corruption in the Mexican police.
Smith escapes the clutches of the authorities and, on his way to rescue "The Face" played by Bradley Cooper, crosses paths with BA Baracus portrayed broodingly 4 then libet up. in the abvious

Don't mess with me fool – Quinton "Rampage" Jackson as BA Baracus.

Togses paths with BA Baracus portrayed broodingly by Quinton "Rampage" Jackson and then links up, in the obvious place a psychiatric unit, with Murdock - Sharitto Copley. The Hollywood version of The A-Team has all the elements of the VI series from the montages of making ingenious devices from "scrap" or kit "acquired" from unknowing suppliers to the catch-phrases such as "I'm going to kill you fool" and "I love it when a plan comes together" and ingenious ways of getting BA to fly.

The film doesn't take itself seriously and neither should the viewer, through the action sequences that are reminiscent of cartoon or computer games that have a level of violence and explosions which keeps your interest and yet never shows a dead body. your interest dead body.

dead body.

Neeson leads his team on an unofficial mission to recover some US
dollar printing plates which could
cause seriously problems for the
USofA, and therefore the world's,
economy. As you would imagine the
plan is meticulously drawn up by



The A-Team from left, Bradley Cooper as "The Face", Sharlto Copley as Murdock, Liam Neeson as Colonel Hannibal Smith and Quinton "Rampage" Jackson as BA Baracus.

Smith and perfectly executed by his team, except for one little glitch

Smith and perfecting executed by his team, except for one little glitch when the plates are stolen. What the trusting A-Team souls didn't know was the Colonel who sent them on the mission, the FBI and CIA and even more secret agencies behind it were all double crossing each other leaving the team to be the scapegoats. This provides the impetus for the rest of the plot as the four men of honour who are court marshalled and jailed seek to escape their captors, recover the plates, bring the true culprits to justice and clear their names – simple really.

### Steering

There are fantastic action sequences which are completely over the top such as steering a tank which is falling to earth with the team inside it by using the recoil of fring the gun. The dialogue, although at times as corny as the 70s series, is never allowed to slow things down and very much in the Mission Impossible vein it uses all the

latest technology, gadgets and hi-tech vehicles to add to the

visual extravaganza.

The A-Team is a lads' film. it's an eye-popping spectacle which like the KFC should be

which like the KFC should be brought on a weekend with some beers then just switch off, tune in and enjoy the ride. The A-Team is out on DVD and Blu-ray now Cert 12. Special features on Blu-ray include an extended cub, behind the scenes featurettes and deleted scenes, while the DVD version's extras include audio commentary and an A-Team mash-up montage.

Danny Farragher



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### thechronicle





Saltwells House, built by the Earl of Dudley in the 19th century, closed in 2001and right, Councillor David Cotterill, Pat Randle, Della Wars, Tracy Poolton, Joe Grosvenor, Councillor David Sparks with a member of the demolition team

# End of an era as mansion is reduced to pile of rubble

house at the heart of a Black Country beauty spot but these pictures show the sad ending for historic Saltwells House.

historic Saltwells riouse.
Contractors have begun demolishing the derelict 19th century property and have already removed one of the exterior walls revealing the rooms inside surrounded by

rubble.

The landmark building, which stands within Saltwells Nature Reserve, in Netherton, had become a magnet for vandals after falling into disrepair and was sold to developers earlier this year.

The demolition is expected to take around four weeks.

who has led campaigns to save the house, said: "It's the end of

an era.
"I am sad to see Saltwells House go and to see it demol-ished in this way is a real

### Nursing

Mursing
"But it had fallen into a sorry state of disrepair and it would have taken more than a 60-minute makeover to get it back to its former glory.
"Sadly, demolition has been necessary because it had become a safety risk.
"Vandals were breaking in and starting fires and someone could have been seriously injured if that was allowed to continue."

continue."
The Saltwells Action Group

hear what was going to be pro-posed for the future use of the

"I want it to be something in

"I want it to be something in keeping with the nature reserve," he added.
Saltwells House, build more than 150 years ago by the Earl of Dudley, was bought by regeneration developer Dudley Public Sector Partnership, which is 50 per cent owned by Dudley Council.

Its plans for the site have not yet been announced.

The building, which closed in

2001, had previously been used as a school and a nursing home.

Offices for the nature reserve's park rangers may also have to be moved.



# **Death of** computer pioneer aged 97

A DUDLEY-BORN mathematics wizard dubbed the father of British computing for his pioneering work in the late 1940s has died at the

age of 97. Professor Sir Maurice Professor Sir Maurice Wilkes designed and built the Edsac computer which set standards on how the technology could be used in learning and

business.

Maurice Wilkes was born to parents Vincent and Ellen on June 26,

and Ellen on June 26, 1913.

He was very proud of his father, who started work on the Earl of Dudley's estate as a 16-year-old office boy and then worked his way up. The future professor attended King Edward VI School, in Stourbridge town centre, and in 1931 started his studies in mathematical physics at St John's College, Cambridge. bridge.

bridge.

He gained his PhD from the university in 1938 after researching radio waves.

Sir Maurice became the head of the mathematical laboratory at Cambridge University in 1946 and held the post until 1970.

He then headed the computer laboratory

He then headed the computer laboratory from 1970-80, and started developing the Edsac machine following his work in developing radar during World War Two. Sir Maurice, who died late last month, is survived by his children Anthony, Margaret and Helen.





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# t cleaning and recycling services will be among est in the country after the council linked up with the services company Serco.

In November this year, Sandwell Council awarded a 25 year contract worth £650 million to Sergo in order to deliver its Waste Improvement Plan (WIP). The partnership is great news for Sandwell residents who will benefit in a number of ways including:

- A single weekly collection day for all rubbish and recycling collected from homes
- An increase in the amount of materials that can be recycled including cardboard and plastics
- All year round fortnightly garden waste collections
- Cleaner streets across the borough
- A state of the art service they deserve

The new partnership will also have a huge impact on recycling figures and make the borough more environmentally friendly.

These benefits include:

- Cutting the amount of waste sent to landfill from 34% to only 5% by 2020
- Non-recyclable waste will be sent to an Energy-from-Waste plant where it will generate renewable energy
- Helping the council to meet Government recycling targets and avoid millions of pounds in potential financial penalties and landfill taxes





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Tetra Pak cartons

Plastic bottles, plastic packaging and food trays, plastic bags, film trays

Collections: currently fortnightly





Grass cuttings Shrub and hedge clippings Plants and weeds Leaves Twigs and bark Flowers Pot plant compost







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Collections: weekly

When will these changes



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New service is in full

# <u>Snow joke on the road</u>

# Bitter weather gives RAC its busiest day for the last 17 years

OR Chrissy Dale, it really was the last thing she needed. Her eight-month-old daughter was in the car ready for nursery, and the 29-year-old prepared to tackle the slippery, snow-covered roads - only to discover her vehicle wouldn't start.

Sunday, November 28 saw the RAC's busiest day in 17 years

with further cold weather predicted.

Brett Hunt has been a leading patrolman for nine years. As well as driving around in one of the familiar-looking orange vans, he looks

after a team of 11 drivers.

The father of two says one of the most common causes of breakdowns in cold weather is battery problems.

"Cold weather affects the performance of the battery," says Brett, aged

ance of the battery," says Brett, aged 44.

"Oil is thicker than it is in warmer weather and the moving parts are tighter so it takes more effort to get things moving – this combined with a tired battery is not good."

Brett's first two calls of the day are to flat batteries in Kingswinford and Oldbury – and then the RAC control centre at Walsall receives a call from Chrissy Dale.

Through his computer, Brett tells the centre he is available to take a callout.

out.

His next job soon arrives down the

phone line and shows up on the skeye.pad that he has near to his satnav on the dashboard.

nav on the dashboard.

It tells him he has to head to Attingham Drive in Dudley, where a non-starting car and Chrissy will be waiting for him.

"I put the location in my sat-nav and it gives me an estimated time of arrival," says Brett, who lives in Netherton and is married to housewife Debbie. Then I give the motorist a call

The RAC has just tackled its busiest day in 17 years.
CATHY SPENCER went out

with one of the patrols to find out about the challenges facing motorists during the cold snap.

to tell them that I'm on my way, which is worth a lot to them."

At Attingham Drive, Chrissy Dale is waiting with her 10-year-old blue Peugeot 106. She says: "I had my baby Poppy ready for nursery and then the car wouldn't start.
"I thought, if this is what it is like at the start of the cold weather, what's it going to be like for the rest of winter?
"I was so relieved when Brett called to say he was only 15 minutes away.

to say he was only 15 minutes away. Today he is my hero."
After doing a few checks, Brett saw the battery was measuring only 175amps when it should be around 370amps.

370amps.
He told Chrissy she would need a new one, and that he could fit one for her the same day.
Brett sent information via his



Brett Hunt, RAC leading patrol, is called to the assistance of stranded Chrissy Dale skeye.pad to the control centre punching in a number of codes: 139 means the battery is flat, 78 the battery has been condemned by a tester, and 85 is that he jump-started

also give feedback to the control centre about the information we received from them and whether it was correct," he says.

called to the assistance of stranded Ch
Peugeot 205, which he has managed
to get started.
Lee, 30, says: "As a builder I
haven't got a clue about cars, so when
it wouldn't start this morning, I knew
I would have to call out the RAC.
"Tve only had the car a few months
but now I'm starting to regret buying
it as sometimes it cuts out when I'm
driving around a corner, although it is
a classic and lovely to drive."
Brett checks the connections in the
car and recommends to Lee that he
has the gas analysers checked at a
garage.

has the gas analysers checked at a garage.
"I used to cover the Oldbury and West Bromwich area but now its Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen and Kidderminsten," says Brett who has two children, Jade, 19, and Shane, 21.
"Last January we had a 4x4 vehicle which we used for pulling cars out of

places like bogs and ditches.

"In cold weather people can panic when their wheels start to spin and they really give it some revs. The best thing to do is to let the vehicle do its own thing and tick over."

His next job is five minutes away at Bilston Street in Sedgley where Nasrin Rezai has called saying her black. Nissan Navara has broken down.

down.
When we arrive, Nasrin is not with

When we arrive, Nasrin is not with her car - she has walked in the snow back to the warmth of her home.

Brett says: "People can often go to someone's house or a shop to keep warm, but it means we are left sitting on the roadside waiting for them.

"We give them a certain amount of time to return to their vehicle and then we just have to leave as there are usually other people waiting for us."

Brett is 'my hero' says Chrissy as the car starts

After 10 minutes Nasrin, 35, who lives in Clifton Street, arrives at the vehicle. She says: "I dropped my two children off at school and when I got back to my car, it wouldn't start.

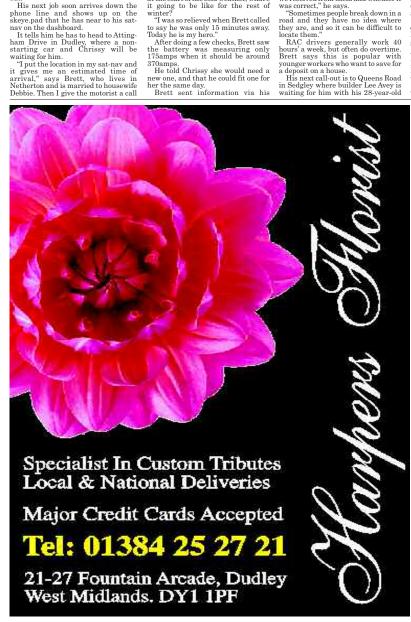
"When I called the RAC they told me it could be up to three hours so I decided to walk back home rather than stay with my car. However, it was only 15 minutes later that Brett celled to stay he was on his way."

called to stay he was on his way."

After checking, Brett discovers

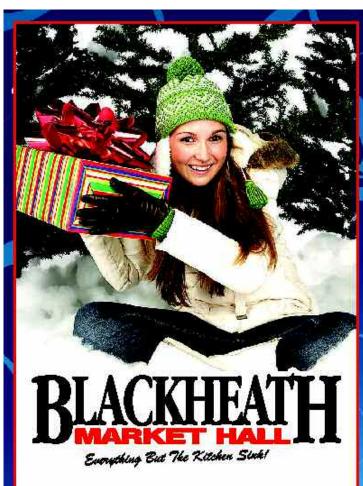
After checking, Brett discovers that the car battery is fine and it is the alternator that needs replacing. "I was so relieved when Brett arrived – as I was walking to the car I could see the flashing lights," says Mogrin.

I could see the meather is so cold the last thing you want to be is stranded, so it is good to know you can call the RAC out to get you moving again."





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Thursday 23rd December: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Friday 24th December: 9.00 am - 4.00 pm

**Christmas Day: Closed** 

Monday 27th December: Closed

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Thursday 23rd December: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm
Friday 24th December: 9.00 am - 4.00 pm
Christmas Day: Closed

Wednesday 29th December: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Thursday 30th December: 9.00 am - 2.00 pm Friday 31st December: 9.00 am - 3.30 pm

Saturday 1st January: Closed

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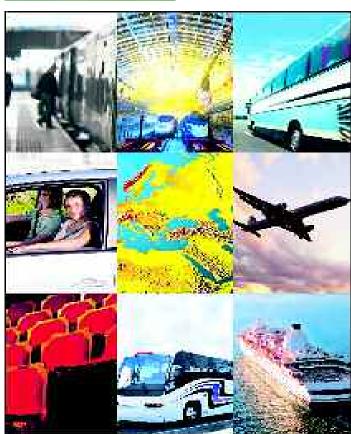
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## thechronicle

# **Double fire** attack hits beauty spot

YOBS have destroyed benches, litter bins and fences in vandal attacks at a park in Dudley.
Taxpayers will now have to foot a bill of more than \$1,000 to replace the items and repair damage at King George V Park, Wordsley.

Yobs used old newspapers to start a fire in two attacks at the beauty spot.

# protest in street

RESIDENTS in Dudley RESIDENTS in Dudley are calling for action to end a year of misery caused by drivers using a rat run to avoid road-works.

works.
People living in
Oakham Road say the
street is clogged with
cars during the morning

cars during the morning and evening rush hours since work began at Burnt Tree island.

They say the increase in traffic is putting lives at risk and has left many residents afraid to cross the read

residents afraid to cross the road.

A speed visor, which flashes a number 30 when a car exceeds the limit, has been erected but residents say it has had no effect as drivers simply ignore it.

They want speed cameras, road humps or chicanes to be installedd, but Dudley Council has said it will not be considered until 2011-12 financial year.

cial year.
Resident Sheila Jones, aged 62, said: "The road is either so busy it's dangerous to cross or the cars are speeding so fast you take your life in your hands."

They then used wooden benches, fencing and litter bins to fuel the

laze. On both occasions the fires have been started between the tennis courts and the park's

### **Plastic**

The blazes also caused damage to plastic bol-lards and asphalt surfac-

Residents living near to the park, off Lawnswood Road, are being urged to keep an eye on the site during the evening.

evening.

And they are asked to call police immediately if they see people causing trouble.

# RSPCA appeal

VOLUNTEERS are needed in Dudley to help collect RSPCA donations. The RSPCA Birmingham Animal Centre wants people to give up two hours on December 11 between 10am and 4pm. Call Helen Tuite on 07715 540518.

# Don't fret, plenty of pluck is on hand for festive concert



for volunteers
Getting ready for a Christmas concert at the Bonded Warehouse, in Stourbridge, is Danielle Saxon Reeves, of the Midlands Fretted Orchestra

AN EVENING of musical entertain-

AN EVENING of musical entertainment is being lined up to celebrate the festive season in Stourbridge next week.

The Midlands Fretted Orchestra will be performing at The Bonded Warehouse in Canal Street on Saturday, December 11.

The Christmas concert will start at 7.30pm but doors and the bar open at

7pm. Tickets are £6 but under-16s are

7pm. Tickets are £6 but under-16s are free when accompanied by an adult. The group, which rehearses in Bear-wood, performs a festive concert every year at the venue. The orchestra is an ensemble of 26 dedicated musicians of all ages who play a fretted instrument such as guitar, mandolin or banjo. For tickets, call 0121 422 7884.

### thechronicle

### **BOOKS**

# Who's a popular gift **choice at Christmas**

shows no signs of losing its phenomenal appeal.

nomenal appeal.

Some feared that the replacement of the hugely popular David Tennant by the younger Matt Smith as the Timelord might dent the Doctor's appeal. However, the enthusiastic Smith has energised the role as the energised the role as the (official) 11th Doctor and the BBCTV sci-fi series that BBCTV sci-fi series that started 47 years ago is as

BBC1V Series Series Chartstarted 47 years ago is as popular as ever.

The BBC has lots of spin-off merchandise that will be filling the stockings of the nation's young Whovians this Christmas.

BBC Children's Books is at the forefront Doctor Who: The Secrets of the TARDIS (£14.99) comes complete with a sonic screwdriver, which beams a UV light for finding messages written in invisible ink. With it, young fans can shine a light into the database of the Doctor's extraordinary Time And Relative Dimensions In Space machine, containing facts and svorlds.

Doctor Who: The Official

state on 170 alien creatures and worlds.

Doctor Who: The Official Annual 2011 (£7.99) will fly off the shelves this festive season. It puts the emphasis on the most recent series, the first full one with the 11th Doctor, and contains a new story plus comics, puzzles and lots of pictures. More on the actor who has won British TV's most coverted role can be found in The Eleventh Doctor: Matt Smit(£6.99).

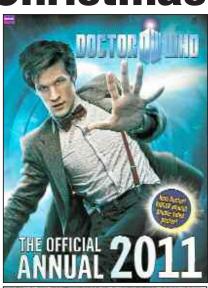
Long time fans will enjoy the highly detailed Doctor Who Companion Compendium (£6.99), a treasure trove of the time traveller's trivia, including how to spell Doctor in Latin, Leon Burakowski

Russian and Dalek. It's everything you're going to need to know if you ever hitch a lift in the TARDIS, including what happened to all the previous companions. Doctor Who:
TARDIS Traveller (28.99) is shaped like the famous craft and like it (and, indeed, all books) is bigger on the inside than out.
BBC Children's Books also has a series of Decide Your Destiny paperbacks (25.99 each) in which your choices determine the direction of the

each) in which your choices determine the direction of the story, enhanced by material online at www.doctorwhochildrensbooks.co.uk. Join the 11th Doctor and get between giant insects and the formidable space police in Judoon Monsoon, take on worwolden in Empire. ponce in Judoon Monsoon, take on werewolves in Empire of the Wolf, take on giant crabs in Claws of the Macra or face the Sycorax in The Coldest War.

### Tom Baker

Meanwhile, the fourth Doctor can be heard in a series of new linked adventures from AudioGO, the new name for BBC Audio Books. Tom Baker is in fine form in the **Demon Quest** series, new adventures featuring the flam-boyant Doctor along with his companions grumpy bouse-





There is nothing like a dame

# Clary doing a turn again with panto virgin Joan



DICK Whittington hits the stage at Birmingham Hippodrome this festive season starring Joan Collins - in her panto debut - and Julian Clary, who began his comedy career under the name 'The Joan Collins Fan Club'.

wicked Queen Hat. Keith Harris and Orville the Duck play the rat catchers. Julian Clary, who will be returning to the Hippodrome to play The Spirit of the Bells, said: "This is probably the biggest and most lavish pantomime I have ever been involved in."

Dick Whittington opens on Saturday, December 18, and runs until January 30.

3D magic comes to Wolverhampton this festive season when an animated genie will be among the stars of the Grand's pantomime, Aladdin, alongside top panto dame Christopher Biggins.

Rocks, spiders and a head-spinning genie come flying towards the audience in hi-tech special effects in the show from panto production house Qdos, which will be staged at the Grand from Saturday, December 11, to January 30.

Former 'King of the Jungle' Biggins and hip comedy ventriloquist Paul Zerdin will ensure lots of chuckles during the city's big Christmas show but the biggest wow factor will come when audiences put on the special glasses issued by the usherettes.

"It's going to be a spectacular pantomime," says Biggins.

See interview with Christopher Biggins on page 30







Fan Club'.

Also appearing in the star-studded show will be Walsall-born Hi-De-Hi star Jeffrey Holland as the Dame, and actor Nigel Havers (as King Rat) who recently quit the jungle by storming off TV show I'm A Celebrity.. Get Me Out Of Here!

Top of the bill will be glamorous former Dynasty star Joan Collins, who will be the wicked Queen Rat. Keith Harris and Orville the Durch leave the rate forces.

The Pulse is taking a Christmas break but will be back in the New Year

# WHAT'S ON



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# Spam! Spam! Spam!

Aladdin arrives at the Grand in Wolverhampton with Christopher Biggins as Widow Twankey, ventril-oquist Paul Zerdin as Aladdin and an animated 3D genie. The show is on from Saturday to the end of

on irom Saturday to the end of January. Meanwhile, over in Birmingham, Joan Collins and Nigel Havers as Queen and King Rat will be menacing Dick Whittington at Birmingham Hippo-drome from December 18 to the end of January.

If you are looking for an alternative to

If you are looking for an alternative to traditional festive fare, Jodie Prenger, Matthew Kelly and Todd Carty are starring in Monty Python musical Spamalot at Birmingham's Alexandra Theatre until New Year's Day.
Preview performances of Matilda, Roald Dahl's story of a telekinetic schoolgirl who gets her revenge on a monstrous headmistress and a loveless family, has been cetting standing over

family, has been getting standing ova-tions at Stratford where the Royal Shakespeare's colourful new production features songs by Aussie comedian

Tim Minchin. It's on until January 30.
Birmingham Repertory Theatre
brings childhood favourite, The Secret
Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett,
to the stage this Christmas, to January to the stage this Christmas, to January 8. David Birtley's lavish new production of the classic fairy tale Cinderella for Birmingham Royal Ballet, with music by Prokofiev, is on until Sunday. Birmingham Stage Company presents the children's fantasy The Firework Maker's Daughter, based on a story by author of The Golden Compass Philip Pullman, at the city's Old Rep theatre until January 28.

The Crescent Theatre Company present their version of TV favourite



Dad's Army at Birmingham's Crescent Theatre from this Saturday to Decem-

ber 18.
Tonight (Thursday) Jeff Wayne's War of the Worlds at the NIA features Jason Donovan, Rhydian, Justin Hayward, a 36-piece string section and a giant Martian fighting machine.



Amy Lennox as Mary Lennox in The Secret Garden at Birmingham Rep

An Evening with
Gervaise Phinn
Prince of Wales Theatre,
Cannock
Jesus came from an egg. How?
Because Mary laid him in a
manger or at least that's how one
young girl saw it in the world
according to raconteur and professional Yorkshireman Gervaise Phinn.

tessional forkshireman Gervaise Phinn.

Phinn was on form with his endless stream of observations, poignant tales and anecdotes which he has collected through many years as an Ofsted inspec-tor in and around the Yorkshire

Dales.

He kept the almost packed Prince of Wales audience enthralled and at one point,

enthralled and at one point, recounting a story inspired by The Beatles' Eleanor Rigby about a dying priest named father McKenzie and his innocent and inspiring relationship with a young boy, you could have heard a pin drop in the almost churchlike reverence that Phinn's congregation were held in.

Phinn's appeal is he has never lost the ability to think and see life from a child's point of view.

The Secret Garden,
Birmingham Rep.
The final production before the
Rep's two year closure due to construction of the city's new library
lives up to the theatre's reputation for technical brilliance but
lacks festive warmth.

Over long and weighed down by too many mediocre songs, this stodgy musical version of Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic Victorian tale about two classic Victorian tale about two upperclass children transformed by experiencing nature has great potential. Get rid of a third of the songs, lop half an hour off the 150 minute running time (with interval), and it could be special.

His stories range from being given a lesson on sheep by an eight year old expert while trying desperately to recount the parable of the lost sheep, to feeling awkward about having to go back to his own boyhood schools and assess the teachers who taught him. you how to read and now you have come back to see if I am doing it right."

Phinn has a clarity and incisiveness which doesn't use smut, offensive behaviour or language and is a refreshing alternative to a lot of the sneering and cynicism

an Italian suppository.

Danny Farragher

The acting and singing are superb. Amy Lennox is engaging as petulant Mary and James Gillan, as bedridden Colin, has the best song as he determines to leave his sickbed. Evelyn Hoskins is a a treat as Martha the maid, her skipping song a highlight. the maid, her skipping song a highlight.

The revolving set of mansion and garden is excellent but, apart from the scene where it snows in the secret garden,

festive sparkle and magic are in festive sparkie ..... short supply. The Secret Garden is at Birm-ingham Rep until January 8. Leon Burakowski

### a lot of the sneering and cynicism around today. And what is innuendo? Accord-ing to one of Phinn's subjects it's -Aresta 12008.807.80(11.00) My ha and Omega

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# Sophie's choice of music

A Mrs Greenhouse during one such encounter told him, "Well what a strange way the world has of turning out when I taught

Ten years on from the release of what has just been named the most played radio tune of the past decade, Sophie Ellis Bextor is back on tour with fourth album, Straight to the Heart.

The married Mum of two has taken a seven year break from solo touring and promises an upbeat, dance floor filling return to her Groovejet, 'If this Ain't Love' best.

"My style of music has come full circle really – I started off with a dance hit and have worked with the likes of Freemasons and Calvin Harris for my latest album.

"The tour is high energy with an upbeat set, including all my old hits as well as the new material – everyone will be up on their feet."

Over the past few years Ms

one will be up on their feet."
Over the past few years Ms
Bextor has toured with legendary
acts Take That, George Michael
and Elton John and is now happy
to be the centre of attention again.

Sophie Ellis Bextor talks to ANNABEL MOTTRAM about going back on tour.

"I have been really lucky to work

"I have been really lucky to work with some amazing people and now come back in my own right-performing for a live audience and getting the crowds going."

The singer, songwriter and model has for the past two years also been enjoining success dj-ing with her husband, The Feeling guitarist Richard Jones.

Sophie, who named her 2008 Olympic handover rendition of Carly Simon's Nobody Does it Better at Buckingham Palace as a career highlight, is to tour for three weeks beginning in Moscow.
"I have a big Russian following and love going over, it's four hours on a plane but a different world altogether. I'm looking forward to

altogether. I'm looking forward to



Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

my return to Birmingham though; I've sung here many times before and love the different venues and

atmosphere."
Sophie Ellis-Bextor is in concert at Birmingham O2 Academy 2, December 18.

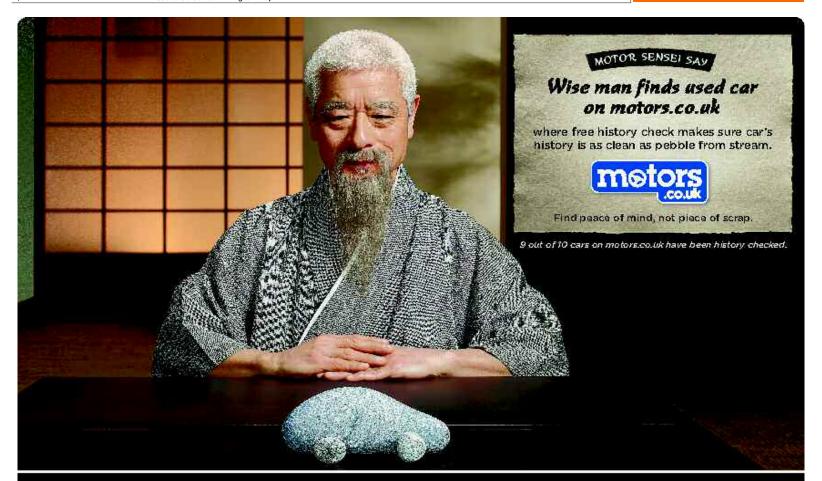
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# Festive Season Opening Hours

MT	EMBAT	HALESOWER	NORTHPALD	CRADULY HEATH	EDIGRASTON
34.12.10	CHRISTMAS EVE	9.00-5.00PM	9.00-12.00PM	9.00-12.00PM	9.00-12.00PM
25.12.10	DHRISTMAS DAY	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIES	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>
25.12.10	BOXING DAY	10.08F4.00PM	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIES	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>
27.12.10	BANK HOLIDAY	10.00-4.00 PM	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIES	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>
25.12.10	BANK HOLIDAY	10.00-4.00 PM	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIES	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>
29.12.10	NORMAL HOURS	9.00F7.00PM	9.00-7.00 PM	9.00=7.00PM	9.04F7.00PM
30.12.10	NORMAL HOURS	9.00-7.00PM	9.00-7.00 PM	9.00-7.00PM	9.00-7.00PM
31.12.10	NEWYEARS EVE	9.00-b.00PM	9.00-12.00PM	9.00-12.00PM	9.00-12.00PM
01.01.11	NEWYEARS DAY	10.00-2.00 PM	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>	EMERGENCIES	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>
2.01.11	HORMAL LIDURS	10.00=5.00 PM	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIES	EMERGENCIE 9
05.01.11	PANK HOUDAY	10.00-4.00 PM	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>	EMERGENCIES	<b>EMERGENCIES</b>

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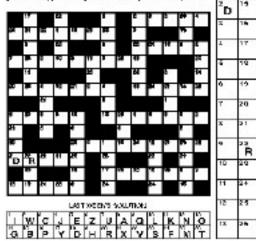
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# Codeword

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# Spectacular show, a 3D genie and and lashings of Twankey panky

pher Biggins, is promising Wolverhampton a spectacular Grand pantomime this winter. The actor and reality TV star is a veteran of 39 pantos but reckons Aladdin, which opens at the Grand on Saturday, could be the best yet. "It is what I call a good old-fashioned London Paladdin and the same property of the same property of

ladium pantomime and what I mean by that is we have unbelievable scenery. I have been doing pantomine for 38 years and I haven't done one with scenery like this, with costumes that are so lavish and an amazing

The show is a tweaked version of the production of Aladdin that broke box office records in Plymouth last year, in which veteran dame Biggins again played Widow Twankey.

"Everyone we did the panto with last year is coming back except for Aladdin and Wishee-Washee and we have put those roles together and have the amazing ventriloquist Paul Zerdin. He is brilliant.

Christopher Biggins talks to LEON BURAKOWSKI about panto, Porridge and paying the mortgage.

"And we have a 3D genie... oh yes we do! " Cue

familiar booming laugh.
"When I saw it in rehearsal I was absolutely blown away. It cost a lot of money and the running costs are huge for it. When Abanazar and Aladdin are in the cave with this extraordinary genie, you can see the kids trying to catch the spiders. It is phenomenal.

It is going to catch the spiders. It is phenomenal. "It is going to be a spectacular pantomime, one of the most spectacular Wolverhampton has staged." Biggins also has a key role in the region's other big pantomime this winter but not on stage... it was he who encouraged his close friend Joan Collins to make her panto debut this year, playing Queen Rat in Dick Whittington at Birmingham Hippodrome.
"We were talking about the fact a job had fallen

on Joan why don't you do a pantomime. I told her she would be great. I think I sowed the seed. Sadly I don't think I will be able to see her perform but I know she's going to be fantastic. We will get together for dinner on our night off."

But another one of his celebrity pals will be calling in at the Grand for one of the performances.

### Career

"Cilla (Black) will be coming to Wolverhampton because she is not doing a pantomime herself this year," said the star, whose early roles included such TV classics as the drama I, Claudius, and prison sitcom Porridge with Ronnie Barker.

com Porrioge with Fortille Barket.
"I am very lucky, I have a very varied, interesting and good career. I loved Nero in I, Claudius, and Ozzy Whitworth in Poldark from my straight acting years. I loved Surprise Surprise with Cilla, I m A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here and Come Dine With Me.

I can plod along and pay

well, thankfully, I paid that off last year – I am happy to be able to live a full

He loves art - he once bought a Hockney for £150 that's now worth £10,000 – and technology, his most treasured possession is his iPhone, he says, and he enjoys holidays in Mauritius.

enjoys floidays in Mauritus.
But he always makes sure he is available for the panto season. "I love the audience participation and I love to make an audience laugh and that it is for everyone, from three to 93.

"When I did the 'Jungle' I didn't do a pantomine."

that year, so I went and saw 15 pantomimes. I went all over the country. It was wonderful."
Aladdin is staged at the Grand from December 11 to January 30.



From left, Glenn Hughes with Jason Bonham on drums and Joe Bonamassa.

# GOOD news for fans of Anglo-American ck supergroup Black Country Communion-no perform their debut UK gig at Wolver-impton Civic Hall on December 29 – fronts and Glenn Hughes is already working on ongs for their second album. The former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer, who lis from Cannock, revealed that BCC is no one-list former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer with the former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer, who list from Cannock, revealed that BCC is no one-list former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer with the former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer, who list from Cannock, revealed that BCC is no one-list former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer with the former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer, who list from Cannock, revealed that BCC is no one-list former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer with the producer of the pr

GOOD news for fans of Anglo-American rock supergroup Black Country Communion -

rock supergroup Black Country Communion who perform their debut UK gig at Wolver-hampton Civic Hall on December 29 – front-man Glenn Hughes is already working on songs for their second album.

The former Deep Purple and Trapeze singer, who halls from Cannock, revealed that BCC is no 'one-off' project when talking to The Chronicle from his hillside home in sunny California, which he shares with wife Gabrielle. "Il ove England but not the cold and the rain," he admitted.

The band features Hughes on vocals and bass guitar, drummer Jason Bonham, the Dudley-born son of the late Led Zeppelin sticksman John Bonham, with Americans – guitarist Joe Bonamassa and keyboardist Derek Sherinian. Their self-titled debut album – a slab of classic bluesy hard rock – has been a big success.

"I have prepared a lot of songs, we've probably got three-quarters of the next album," said Glenn.

### Thankful

"Songwriting is what I do and I do it every day, even on Christmas Day. I am known as a rock singer, and I appreciate and am thankful for that but primarily I am a songwriter. Those creative urges get stronger the further I get from the days when I would get high or drunk.

get nigh or drunk."
He reckons it's fate that has brought the four of them together in a band after years of friendship, a lifetime's worth when it comes to Jason Bonham. "I knew Jason before he knew me," said Glenn. "

remember when he was a two-year-old, John (his

father) was a friend of mine and I was like an uncle to Jason. He's my friend's son and I love him to bits.

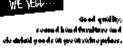
"I believe in fate and in karma. I had a dream which told me lwas going to be in a rock 'n' roll band again. I was all set to make another funky Glenn record but I put the brakes on... and three weeks later I'm in this band Black Country Communion."

The name references Glenn and Jason's roots in the West Midlands.

"It was very important to me and to Jason that the first gig be at Wolverhampton Civic Hall. That really means something to us. It's a great rock venue in the heart of the Black Country. We've got to play where the name came from.

"I've played the venue about ten times but not in recent years. I played there with my first band The News in 1988, then in '69 with Finders Keepers, then several times with Trapeze and then with Deep Purple a couple of times." Just before heading down the carryon to record at Malibu, Glenn signed off with a cheery "Up the Wolves!"









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# Refreshed Honda Jazz promises better handling, ride comfort and new Hybrid model

# Supermini to get jazzed up



THE popular Jazz supermini from Honda has been given a refresh for 2011, with a range

of enhancements to

w Jazz Hybrid Its'
downsizing from larger
vehicles from other
sectors. Leather seats
are standard on the Jazz
Hybrid in HX trim and
available as a £1,250
option on the 1,4-litre
petrol EX model.

Another change across
the range is a new darker
dashboard material
which contrasts strongly
with the orange and blue

The rear seats can now ecline 73mms to

comfort.
The established 1.2-litre and best-selling 1.4-litre i-VTEC petrol engines remain in the

Jazz range and to com-pliment the launch of the Hybrid variant, these two petrol engines have benefited from some small reductions in CO2 values and improved fuel

values and improved fuel economy.

The 1.4-litre manual variant with manual transmission has emissions starting at 126 g/km down from 128 g/km and uses 51.4mpg on the combined cycle.

The fuel sipping 1.2 litre engine uses 53.3mpg and also drops two grams of CO2 to 123g/km.

Suspension

The Jazz Hybrid is an ultra-efficient car with a combined fuel consump-

combined fuel consump-tion figure of 62.8 mpg. Its CO2 output of just 104g/km makes the Jazz Hybrid the lowest of any automatic car in the B-

Thanks to this contin

The 2011 prices range from £11,295 for the 1.2 S to £17,995 for the flag-ship Hybrid HX.

looks driving dynamics. driving dynamics.
The revised Jazz
range, which will
include a hybrid
model, goes on sale in
the UK on February 1,
2011, with prices
starting from £11,295
for the 1.2 S model
and £15,995 for the
Hybrid variant in HE
trim. with the orange and blue back lighting of the dials, gauges and displays across the dashboard. across the dashboard.

The orange backlighting colour is unique to the petrol powered variants, while the Hybrid version uses the blue lighting to differentiate the model from the rest of the range.

of the range.
The "magic seats", famed for their flexibility and multiple seating and cargo-carrying configurations.

istics that make the Jazz so popular.
But by enhancing the car's strongest qualities, Honda has taken the Jazz on to the next stage. Staff have produced a car with greater flexibility, better looks, increased ride comfort and improved environmental credentials.
While the 2011 car is just as cleverly packrations – are now even better with the addition of a reclining rear seat. recline increase rear passenger

just as cleverly pack-aged, fresh styling gives the Jazz a new appear-

New front and rear umpers are the main parts to have influenced the look of the car.

### **Airflow**

Airflow
These have also been designed to reduce drag as the airflow passes over the Jazz's body and to avoid turbulence when the airflow detaches from the rear.
These styling improvements aid aerodynamic efficiency on all Jazz models.
Constantly variable transmission, more commonly known as "CVI", first appeared in the previous Jazz range and due to overwhelming customer demand Honda has brought it back along with a few clever improvements.
The CVT is an automatic transmission that keeps the engine in a rev range where the car is most efficient.
As well as ensuring the whole power train of the Jazz is more efficient, it also offers the driver a smooth and effortless journey.
The CVT transmission is a standard feature on the Hybrid and an option on 1.4 litre petrol models where, thanks to the

automatic car in the B-segment.

The suspension on the 2011 Jazz features revised settings to increase ride comfort and improve handling.

Already well respected for its lightness and manoeuvrability around town, the Jazz benefits from improvements to steering feel at higher speeds.

Thanks to this continuous improvement the revised model has a much firmer, positive steering feel as speeds increase to inspire a confident driving experience.

All Jazz models, including the Hybrid version, share new sleek, projector style headlights adding to the sportier look.

There are four new colours available across the petrol range – with a further two exclusive to the Hybrid models: Lime green metallic and taffeta white.

The 2011 prices range

is a standard feature on the Hybrid and an option on 1.4 litre petrol models where, thanks to the improvements, it now matches the economy and emissions of the outgoing Jazzi-SHIFT, with a CO2 value of 125g/km. Leather upholstery makes a very welcome appearance for the first time in the Jazz range. Along with the addition of chrome rings defining the air vents, instruments and climate controls across the dashboard, the leather trim gives a whole new premium feeling to the interior of the car.

That can be an important option for customers



Its 'magic seats' are renowned for their flexibility



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316-03 MCHELLE Black Builds, 30, convyydin, size: (2, 50 Sins, seedalsk, friendly, undrastanding, keding, seeda male, 30, 38, to enjoy remarke nights. Tal. No: 0005-436-6562 Sco. No: 3179-15



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Soa No: 336477 29 ETTY size: 8 female, 19, seeka male to spell and treat her like: a 2 increas. Tal No: 0905-436-6562 Soa No: 935019

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Mills alim, young at heart 希々 old famale, seeks tall, kind hearted made for rights ent and companionship. Tel No: 0005 496 8982 Sea No: 323363 登

45 YS oil natural red local, libra resk music, seeks tall, dark, genninc, hencet mak: for possible relationship. Tal No: 0005 436 6962 Sos No: 312407 PETITE Ideatic belg 59, CAIAC, Bica countryside, nights 64, dancing circ na, theater, Indilaya, seeks gent with similar increasa. Tal No: 0905 439 9592 Stor No: 393995

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# SDOTE

# Ann ends year with a swing

KIDDERMINSTER Golf Club Ladies' section finished off their year with the General Meeting last Wednesday. The outgoing captain, Ann Billingham, said it had been a great honour to hold the position with the club and that she had really enjoyed her year. She said that it had been an experience that she would remember proudly and thanked all the members who made it such a pleasure to play at Kidderminster.

derminster.
She thanked all the ladies, and men, for their help and support throughout

the year. During the year the ladies raised more than £2,000 for the captain's charity, The British Heart

Foundation.
The ladies also collected toys for disadvantaged children in Kiddermin-ster, distributed through the Salvation Army, and held a bridge drive which raised more than £650 for the captain's

charity.

Ann said that incoming captain, Ann said that meeting capearin, Maureen Brewer, was committed to the club. She wished her all the best for the coming year.

# Glassboys off again

THE Glassboys Red Insure Cup 2nd Round tie at Cinder-ford was postponed for a second time on Tuesday night.

The match has been re-arranged for Tuesday, 7.45pm kick-off.

This means Tuesday's sched-

7.45pm kick-off.
This means Tuesday's scheduled league game at home to
Hemel Hempstead will now
take place on an alternative
date yet to be confirmed.
Stouwhiden here

Stourbridge have been

drawn away at Blue Square Bet North outfit Redditch United in the semi-finals of the Worcestershire Senior

the Worcestershire Senior Cup.
The tie has provisonally been arranged for Tuesday. 15th February (7.45pm). In the other semi-final, the winners of the first round clash between Halesowen Town and Stourport Swifts will be at home to Worcester City.



# Laura is jumping with joy

MEMBERS of Stourport Trampoline Club have done themselves proud in the last three competi-tions of the year. And among those doing well was 13--year-old Laura Saich, who re-presented Hagley Roman Catholic School, at the West Midlands Schools Competition, Birming-ham.

Competition, Birmingham.

Their team performance was good enough to get them through to the Central England and Wales competition to be held in Cardiff next year. She will be joined there by 12-year-old Taymar Pearce-Mason, who represented The Chantry High School, Martley, Worcestershire.

# Young race ace Dean gets chance at wheel of F1 car

A RACING driver from Wolverhampton has launched his Formula One career off the starting grid after putting a McLaren Mercedes through its paces at the home of British racing, Silverstone. Not only did former Dudley student Dean Smith, aged 22, realise a lifelong ambition during the 18-lap stint, he also thoroughly impressed the watching McLaren management.

Dean was said to have delivered an assured performance on his big debut and now plans to knuckle down in the feeder GP3 series in order to win a permanent place on the F1 circuit.

He earned the opportunity to test with McLaren by winning the Autosport BRDC award in 2009.

racing.
"Driving a Formula One car is something I've wanted to do all my life and to have actually achieved that aim, thanks to everyone at Vodafone



Dean Smith in the F1 car as he shows his skills at Silverstone and, right, all smiles afterwards

McLaren Mercedes and the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award, really is a dream come true." he said. "When I went out on track for the first time it was pretty wet but that wasn't a problem, everything felt very comfortable and quite natural actually. "The McLaren Mercedes is absolutely awesome. I feel so privileged to have had the opportunity to test the car. "I'm really pleased with the job I did and the

team told me how impressed they were too so it

team told me now impressed they were too so it couldn't have gone any better."

Dean is now looking for sponsorship to help him compete in GP3 again next year after finishing seventh in this year's championship – the highest placed Briton. He added: "Now I've shown what I can do in an F1 car, it's more vital than ever to attract the sponsorship and investment we need."

# Flu takes toll on champ as he loses title defence

# Getting a kick out of success

She will be joined there by 12-year-old Taymar Pearce-Mason, who represented The Chantry High School, Martley, Worcestershire.

She had an amazing competition in which she had a huge lead after her Ist routine.

Her 2nd routine was also performed well with good form and the highest difficulty score to gain her 1st place.

Taymar also gained fourth place at the West Midlands Closed Age Groups, Coventry, which attracts the region's best performers in their age group.

A MARTIAL arts club from Cradley Heath gave a five-star performance at a recent fournament of German, German, Valves and Semantial Arts took five fighters to the competition which featured 17 countries and some of Europe's top kick-boxing teams. Kicking off the medal tally was 13-year-old Holly O'Connor, who travels from Gloucester to train three times a week at Charlesworth of the medal rost train the was 13-year-old Holly O'Connor, who travels from Gloucester to train three times a week at Charlesworth of Weston Bogle, from Old Hill, represented England in a six-hour long team battle. They beat current the Groups, Coventry, which attracts the region's best performers in their age group.



Star kickbox performers, from left: Weston Bogle,Reuben Charlesworth, Holly O'Conner, Tara Billingham, Holly O'Conner and Kyeran Cox

O'Conner, Tara Billingham, Ho winning many European titles and looks to be following in the footsteps of his fourtime World Champion mum, Julie.

Weston claimed an individual title, despite picking up an injury during the team battle and having to carry on with one arm. Jason Charlesworth, who runs the club, said: "Weston showed skill and grace to defeat all that attempted to beat him. He is so talented; even with his injury I knew he would win."

Kyeran, also struggling from the team fights, later discovered he had broken a

competitors to win his category. bone in his foot, but still managed to see off

Last but not least came 17-year-old Holly Halls student Tara Billingham, who

Holly Halls student Tara Billingham, who had pressure on her after enjoying a year that any top athlete would be proud of.
Opponents tried every trick in the book but she listened to her coach and overwhelmed the 500 crowd with her flamboyant nature and sharp awareness to win.
Anyone who wants to join the club should contact Jason on 07889 627929 or 01384 356805.

Cauley was dethroned as Midlands champion after a close points call went against him at Coventry's Hilton Hotel.

McCauley was demanding a rematch by the time he got to the dressing room after Sean McKervey's hand was raised at the

Sean McKervey's hand was r final bell on Saturday night.

That followed the outgoing champion slicing open his challenger after a barrage of shots in the third round, which left McKervey with five stitches and a perforated eardrum.

Abruising battle went against the West Midlands fighter, who struggled in the later rounds with endurance.

That was because McCauley had been struck down with flu the day before fight night, which told as the pace was upped in key periods of the contest.

The snap in his punches deserted him in the final three rounds with McKervey the busier despite his injury.

Avenge

### Avenge

Avenge
Referee John Keane
had the doctor up on the
mat twice during the
contest and it didn't
seem the fight would go
the distance, but the
challenger dug it out to
rip the belt from his
grash

rip the belt from his grasp.

It was a contentious point call, one that McCauley thought the referee was swayed into making by the crowd.

He said: "I gave him the shot days after I won the title, hopefully he will give me a rematch in the same time frame.

### **Ding-dong** contest for Dean

DUDLEY'S Dean DUDLEY'S Dean Anderson, who came through a brutal six-rounder against debutant Chuck Jones at featherweight at Birmingham's Holiday Inn on Monday. Monday.

Anderson is now two unbeaten since his debut last month and expects to be back in the ring in February.

# Strength in depth display by girls

THE Bev Price Team Championships, held annually by Kiddermin-ster's Samurai Judo Club at Walsall Sport Cam-pus, remains Britain's premier judo team, com-petition.

As usual there were

As usual there were strong teams from all over the country, but the Samurai's own teams held their own, coming away with a gold and two bronges

bronzes.

Hamish Beaumont
won all four of his contests with maximum
points.

points.
In the girls, Darcie Hancocks had four good wins and there were some good wins from Bryony Griffiths, but they ended up losing narrowly for the bronze, 2-1.

### Strong

Strong
The current strength in depth in the Samurai girls meant both teams in the heavyweights were strong contenders.
The Two Gorillas and a Monkey team of the light but brave Bryony Grifths and Jade Farrell and Rachel Moon and Frankie's Monsters, with Frankie Marston, Jodie Caller and Sally Moon met in the semi-finals, which Frankie's won.
They went on to take

February.

Thought I had done enough to keep the belt, I have got to be honest. But the 31-year-old has vowed to be ready to go again in the New Year and hopes to have the chance to avenge defeat. He said: "I wasn't well on the night and it's treadful luck, getting struck down with flu the day before a fight is as bad as it gets.

"But I am a fighter, I have come through worse and if the rematch doesn't come off it will only because he doesn't want it.

"I will fight anyone, anytime if it's right."

Frankie Marston, Jodic Caller and Sally Mom met in the semi-finals, which Frankie's won.

The senior men's section is always termely tough. The Samurai fielded two women's teams, dilled Rancocks along-side Rachel Moon.

The first new ownen's teams, dilled wow women's teams, dilled Rancocks along-side Rachel Moon.

The first new ownen's teams, dilled wownen's teams, dilled Rancocks along-side Rachel Moon.

The senior men's section is always termely tough. The Samurai fielded two women's teams, dilled Rachel Moon.

The senior men's section is always to women's teams, dilled two women's teams, which they lost the first team went on to take bronze. Samurai fielded two teams.

The Samurai fielded two women's teams, Gemma O'Dowd, Kate Walker and Sally Moon and sisters Charis and Millie Hancocks along-side Rachel Moon.

The first team went through to the semi-finals, which they lost but came back to take the bronze medal.

# Back from brink to joint top spot

MEET Halas Hawks under-13 girls have bounced back from the verge of extinction to be joint top of their division in the Stourbridge and District League. The team was about to fold at the end of last season because it had no manager. But members of the Halas Hawks committee Pauline Hickman, Kevin Weston, Steve Wem and Tracey Adderley stepped in to take the reins and the team has subsequently gone from strength to strength. The girls are: Sophie Blount, Sophie Pritchard, Danielle Dudson, Chelsea Dudson, Ciara Robinson-Morris, Olivia Tandy, Mia Bell, Chelsea Beamer, Megan Hipkiss, Chiloe Gorton, Kimberley Gorton and Gina Goode.

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